



United States Mission to the OSCE

Response to the Report by the Head of the OSCE Spillover Monitor Mission to Skopje, Carlos Pais

As delivered by Chargé d'Affaires Bruce Connuck
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
October 27, 2005

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The United States very warmly welcomes Ambassador Pais back to the Permanent Council, and thanks him for his very concise report on the situation in Macedonia. It is always a pleasure to see an old colleague here again. Ambassador Pais and his staff are to be commended for their important role in assisting the people and government of Macedonia in bringing about positive change.

The United States welcomes the positive developments in Macedonia that Ambassador Pais has outlined in his report. In particular, we are encouraged that decentralization has begun in earnest. We commend Macedonia for taking the first steps to devolve authority to regional and local levels, and we urge the government to continue this course without wavering. It will require political will to ensure that the reform is carried out in a way that enhances the ability of government to provide service to its citizens free of political pressures.

The Mission's efforts in the area of rule of law have yielded significant results, and we concur with the Mission's continued focus on its work with political parties, training of the police and reform of the judiciary. Public confidence in both the impartiality and the competence of police, prosecutors and judges is crucial to the health of a multi-ethnic society like Macedonia's. The Mission's ongoing training of these public entities, and its advice on draft legislation, are essential programs that deserve our highest priority. Mr. Chairman, the United States is also encouraged by the news that the Macedonian authorities have established a working group to recommend proposals to overhaul electoral legislation. We once again call on the Macedonian government to implement the recommendations of the OSCE/ODIHR report of the 2005 municipal elections. Such action will be crucial to ensuring that parliamentary elections in 2006 are conducted freely and fairly and in accordance with OSCE commitments and international standards.

We further commend the Mission for its responsible and rational downsizing plans. As Macedonia continues to make progress in the areas of security and rule of law, it is only natural that the Mission gradually decreases in size.

Once again, I would like to thank Ambassador Pais for his excellent report, and to wish him and his entire staff all the best in their continuing efforts.

Thank you.